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USACE – Iraqi Government collaborate on border road project

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Guests and official party gather for a groundbreaking ceremony near the border of Syria in the far western Al Anbar Province Saturday, Jan. 30, marking the beginning of construction on a new border road. (GRD photo by Scott Harris)

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq - A groundbreaking ceremony for a major road construction project along the Iraqi-Syrian border in the far western Al Anbar Province Saturday, Jan. 30, was groundbreaking in two ways for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Gulf Region District.

The ceremony, attended by Iraqi and U.S. dignitaries including the Iraqi Interior Minister, Commander of U.S. Forces in Iraq, Gen. Raymond Odierno and Brig.

Gen. Kendall P. Cox, commander of the USACE Trans-Atlantic Division, marked the first phase of a project to construct roads along the Iraq-Syrian border. The roads will link the myriad of remote outposts along the border and is designed to provide better protection against smugglers and foreign insurgents.

The project is also groundbreaking for USACE in that the Iraqi government is financing the \$52 million project and the Gulf Region District is serving as the con-



Iraqi road crew prepares machinery for a demonstration during a groundbreaking ceremony Saturday, Jan. 30, paving the way for a new border road to be constructed in the western Al Anbar Province of Iraq. (GRD photo by Scott Harris)

struction management partner, according to Col. Dan Anninos, the Gulf Region District commander. "This marks the first time that the Iraqi government and the Corps have collaborated together from start to finish on a construction project including the acquisition, design, construction, management and quality control," Anninos said. "As the management partner in the project, we've hired two construction firms: one to actually do the physical labor and a second architectural and engineering firm to manage the quality control of the project."

USACE engineers are also playing a mentoring role in the project, according to Robert Player, the Al Anbar Resident Office project engineer for the road construction project. "Along with our primary role as the contract manager, we are also

going to train the Iraqi contractors on how to work the western style of construction management," Player said.

The 90 kilometer road will be constructed with asphalt, according to Player. Crews will first have to dig down or build up the surface of the new road. Next the road crews lay a 12-inch aggregate sub-base compacted to 95 percent soil density. The process then calls for a four-inch asphalt base, followed by a two-inch asphalt wear course. In total, the road will have six inches of asphalt to ensure resilience under the harshest desert conditions, according to Player.

Player says that four road-crew teams will be split along the 90 kilometers of road, with each team scheduled to complete five kilometers of road every 60

days. With the road's proximity to the Syrian border ranging from 100 to 700 meters, crews must follow the site survey maps closely.

The Iraqi owned Khairy Hemayen Company is the general contractor for the road project. The project is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2011.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the U.S. Government and the Government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed 5,257 projects throughout Iraq valued at more than \$9.1 billion, and has more than 350 projects ongoing. The overall reconstruction effort in Iraq currently provides jobs for more than 20,000 Iraqis.

The Gulf Region District, headquartered in Baghdad, Iraq is a joint effort comprising Civilians, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Contractors.

GRD provides quality and sustainable engineering in support of civil/military construction in Iraq. GRS and its Iraqi partners are building a strong foundation for Iraq's future.

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